Cabinet

16 July 2014

Review of Children's Centres in County Durham

Report of Corporate Management Team
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Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out the detail of a review of the current service delivery model in view of the new Early Years Strategy and the role/requirement of Children's Centre buildings to deliver improved outcomes.

2. The outcome of the review proposes a new model of service delivery for children and families in the early years and gives consideration to the implications for the existing stock of Children's Centre buildings in the implementation of the new model.

3. The proposals put forward for consultation as a result of this review are intended to improve service delivery while at the same time reducing the cost base of the service. This will be achieved by retaining as many front-line staffing posts as possible, reducing the number and cost of fixed buildings and making more use of community venues to improve access and use of these services.

4. Proposals outlined within this report sets out an approach that will:-

    - Shift emphasis from the provision of buildings to the provision of services;
    - Deliver services closer to where families live;
    - Concentrate resources where deprivation levels and needs are highest;
    - Deliver services that are directly linked to local needs and outcomes;
    - Retain the flexibility to move points of delivery as community needs change;
    - Make better use of existing buildings in the heart of communities such as libraries, leisure centres, youth centres, community centres and schools, and
    - Reduce the financial, managerial, administrative and regulatory burdens faced by the council linked to the current children's centres.

5. This report seeks Cabinet agreement to consult on the proposals contained in the report, namely:

- The proposed Community Delivery Model
- A proposed change to the number of children's centres from 43 to 15

Background

6. The Council's current MTFP requires efficiency savings of approximately £224 million from 2011 to 2017. Savings targets for 2011/12 and 2012/13 have been achieved. Savings targets for Children & Adults Services (CAS) are currently £11.212m for 13/14 and £12.4m for 14/15. Further budget reductions are expected for the service from 2015/16 onwards.

7. The current Children's Centre budget is £4,908,264. £1,553,976 is for the provision of Children's Centre buildings which amounts to 32% of the overall Children's Centre budget and £3,354,288 for staffing. The proposals outlined in this report focus on a different delivery model that will ensure that the services which continue to be provided are targeted at those children and families who need them most.

8. The proposals set out in this paper, if approved following consultation, would deliver MTFP 14/15 and 15/16 savings of approximately £1 million from buildings and staffing.

9. It is important to note that Children's Centre spend represents only 40% of Council spend on early intervention and prevention services. These services aim to support families early when additional needs emerge in order to prevent those needs escalating and requiring the involvement of more resource intensive specialist services.

10. In addition to the Children's Centre budget, the Council currently funds £7.3m on preventative services including Family Pathfinder Services, Family Intervention Teams and the Stronger Families programme and also early years support such as qualified teachers, nursery respite provision for children with special needs and child care provision.

11. In 2011 the Childrens Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee carried out an extensive review of Children's Centre services across County Durham. This review outlined 9 recommendations which are summarised as follows:-

- Make sure resources are used to more effectively target those children and families who would benefit most;
- Develop an engagement strategy to help identify vulnerable families;
- Improve information sharing;
- Obtain live birth information from the County Durham Registry Office;

- Ensure all staff receive training in the Common Assessment Framework;
- Ensure adult learning opportunities are being accessed by those parents most in need;
- Implement the integrated service (the One Point Service);
- Ensure services provide value for money;
- Review the implementation of the above recommendations.

12. Whilst a number of improvements have been made to Children's Centre service delivery, it remains the case that County Durham's children are less ready to start school and fewer achieve a good level of development at the end of the reception year than their peers both regionally and nationally. More detailed evidence to support this is set out in paragraphs 29-37.

13. In March 2014, Cabinet approved the Early Years Strategy which sets out three Key Ambitions for children and families during their early years, and the actions required to achieve them. The key ambitions are:-

I. Quality of Care:
All children have access to high quality universal health and learning opportunities that are safe;

II. Equity of Outcomes:
Children who are not making the required progress or whose outcomes are compromised are identified and additional help is provided to them and their families at the earliest possible opportunity;

III. Working Together:
All practitioners involved in the delivery of early years services work together in a coordinated way in the provision of a genuinely joined up, integrated service to children and families.

14. The Early Years Strategy seeks to create a service that:

- Is more accessible, particularly to those who are reluctant to use the service they need;
- Targets our resources to those who need it most;
- Improves support to families through access to services which are well coordinated and focus on improving outcomes;
- Makes sure children are well equipped to engage in learning by the time they reach school age;
- Makes more flexible use of resources to provide the best possible outcomes for children and value for money;
- Requires better joint working between agencies and effective information sharing;
- Makes better use of community resources by delivering an outreach model;

- Makes savings by reducing the number of buildings overall, whilst retaining a sufficient level of front-line staff resource to deliver the services needed by our communities.

15. The Early Years Strategy contributes to the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Children & Families Partnership shared priority to help children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life.

16. The Strategy agreed in March 2014 acknowledged that a review of the service delivery model would be required to ensure that the following is provided:

- Support targeted to those who need it most;
- Accessible services for all;
- Flexible use of resources;
- Effective community engagement in early years delivery;
- Continued development of an expert workforce;
- Improved outcomes.

Review of Early Years' Service Model and Children's Centres

17. Proposals for the future service model, including configuration of Children's Centres in County Durham, have been developed within the context of national policy and guidance. The proposals contained in this report have also been informed by comparisons with national, regional and statistical neighbours.

18. A new operating framework is being proposed to ensure a more targeted and a more effective approach to family support is established in County Durham. This is designed to provide the best service possible within available resources and to deliver savings predominantly through a reduced estate. This will allow the council to protect, as far as possible, front line staff resource and service provision acknowledging that people not buildings deliver services.

19. The One Point Service[1] currently manages 43 Children's Centres. Each of the 43 Children's Centres covers a defined geographical area and provides a range of services to families within the "reach" area. The "reach" refers to the total number of children under the age of 4 who live within the geographical area covered by the centre.

20. For management purposes the 43 Children's Centres are currently grouped into five geographical areas (Localities) and details of these along with the number of 0-4 year olds served, including those in the top 30% most deprived

[1] One Point is a 0-19 integrated service delivering to children, young people and families. Working together with staff from the NHS, One Point provides a one-stop shop for support, advice and a range of activities for children, young people and their families.

areas that are within each Locality are set out in **Appendix 2**.

21. In reviewing the current arrangements we have:-

- Reflected on the evolution of Children's Centres in County Durham and changes in policy direction between 1999 to date;
- Analysed needs relating to deprivation, using the Index of Deprivation 2010[2];
- Considered the impact of our Children's Centres in relation to social, economic and learning outcomes;
- Considered the inspection outcomes for our Children's Centres over the period 2010-13;
- Considered the views of service users as expressed through user surveys; and
- Considered the need to make required MTFP efficiency savings.

Existing Provision: Background and Policy Context

22. Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLP) were introduced in 1999. The aims of the programme were to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty, school failure and social exclusion by improving the life chances of children under 4 growing up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. All programmes were expected to provide family support; outreach and home visiting; good quality play and learning and childcare; health care and advice; and support for families with special needs.

23. Ring fenced funding was available for the programme and between 2000/01 and 2010/11 Durham received funding of c. £100 million via the Sure Start Programme. The ring fenced funding arrangement ceased in 2011/12 at which point the funding was included within the general formula grant allocations.

24. By 2003 Durham County Council had developed 12 Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLP) and 2 mini programmes governed by Local Programme Boards. These programmes were expected to serve the 20% most disadvantaged communities in England as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2000). 52 of Durham's 152 electoral wards were served by these programmes.

25. The first phase of Children's Centres in 2004, led to 19 Children's Centres being developed from within the SSLP's and a further 11 centres which increased coverage to 63 wards. Full designation of the 30 centres was achieved in 2006.

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[2] The Index of Deprivation has seven distinct domains: Income Deprivation; Employment Deprivation; Health Deprivation and Disability; Education Skills and Training Deprivation; Barriers to Housing and Services; Living Environment Deprivation; Crime.

26. By 2005/06, (in phase two) the target for County Durham was to make Children's Centres available to 17,600 under-fives in the top 30%[3] Super Output Areas (SOA's). This involved the creation of a further 13 centres making a total of 43 centres in County Durham.

27. In phase 3, (2008-10) all under-fives and their families were to have access to Children's Centre services. There was government acknowledgement that these later centres would not need to provide the full core offer of services that applied at the time, but should be sensitive to local needs. No further centres were built in County Durham but the use of existing Children's Centres with further premises identified as 'outreach' bases was expected to broaden access to services.

28. The core offer was revised in 2012 by government and a Core Purpose agreed, which required Children's Centres to be focussed on:-

- Improving outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in:-
    i. child development and school readiness;
    ii. parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills;
    iii. child and family health and life chances;
- Assessing need across the local community;
- Providing access to universal early years services in the local area including high quality and affordable early years education and childcare;
- Providing targeted evidence based early interventions for families in greatest need, in the context of integrated services;
- Acting as a hub for the local community, building social capital and cohesion;
- Sharing expertise with other early years settings to improve quality;
- Respecting and engaging parents;
- Working in partnership across professional/agency boundaries.

Outcomes for Children during their Early Years

29. The 43 Children's Centres have become familiar to a number of families in County Durham and many describe how their centre has supported them in their parenting role. Overall feedback from those who use the service has been positive.

30. Outcomes for children are measured using the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. The EYFS is the statutory framework that sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children

[3] Super Output Areas are a geography for the collection and publication of small area statistics. SOAs give an improved basis for comparison across the country because the units are more similar in size of population than, for example, electoral wards.

learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

31. There has been improvement in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes between 2006/07 to 2011/12, but the gap between outcomes for children in County Durham and those achieved nationally has not narrowed, with children in County Durham experiencing poorer outcomes through the EYFS profiling when compared with national and regional benchmarks. See Fig.1 below.

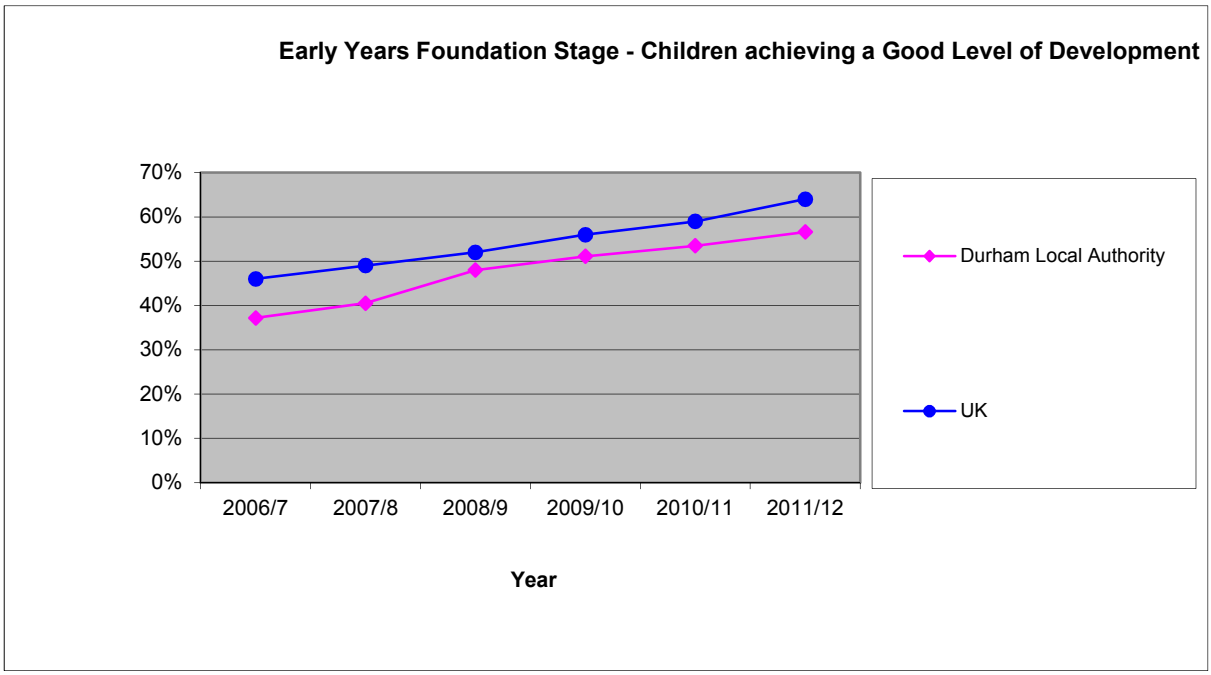

Fig.1

32. In 2013, 52% of children achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) across England compared with 41.7% of children in Durham over the same period.

33. Children living in the lowest performing 30% areas in England who achieved a GLD was 44% compared to only 36% in Durham. 36% of those eligible for Free School Meals achieved a GLD in England compared to 26% in Durham.

34. In comparison to the IPF[4] group average, County Durham has a significant number of children's centres. (**Appendix 3).** On average our Children's Centres each serve the lowest numbers of children aged 0-4 compared to others. This is not reflected in performance outcomes, which still lag behind and the attainment gap has not narrowed over the last 7 years.

[4] The Institute of Public Finance (IPF) compare Local Authorities most similar based on deprivation and demography data.

35. The Department of Education (DfE) Section 251[5] statement sets out Durham's current planned spend on Children's Centres per capita. The "per capita" for this area of spend is based on the total 0-17 population, which for County Durham in 2013/14 was 101,258. This calculation provides a comparison with planned spend at regional level and with Durham's statistical neighbours. Durham is ranked fifth of twelve when compared with North East authorities, and third of eleven authorities in our statistical benchmark group. In 2013/14 Durham's planned spend was £74 per capita on Children's centres, the regional average was £65 per capita and Durham's statistical neighbours average was £61 per capita. Based on these per capita levels of planned spend, Durham County Council planned spend in 2013/14 was £0.91million more than the regional average and £1.32 million more than the average planned spend by statistical neighbours.

36. The Annual Report of Early Years Provision (2011/12) by Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, identified Durham as one of the ten lowest performing Authorities in the Country. The report reviewed inspection outcomes across a range of early years' provision, which included Childminders, Daycare, Nurseries and Children's Centres.

37. Children's Centre Inspection Outcomes from 2010 to date are provided in **Appendix 4**. In summary, as of January 2014, 40% of Centres inspected have achieved a Good judgement, 57% a Satisfactory/Requires Improvement judgement and 2% have been judged "inadequate". Under the new Inspection Framework implemented in April 2013, 'Satisfactory' judgements have been replaced with 'Requires Improvement'. In County Durham, "good" or "outstanding" inspection judgements are fewer than the national average.

Children's Centre Service

38. In late 2012, in line with the need to make savings and in accordance with proposed changes to the OfSTED Inspection Framework, the 43 Children's Centres were grouped into 16 Clusters. This achieved efficiency savings of approximately £330,000, brought about by a more streamlined management arrangement.

39. County Durham's Children's Centres have not, by and large, differentiated their services to reflect changing requirements nationally and locally. Most centres have delivered a very similar range of services regardless of their location.

40. Most services are offered on a universal basis to all families within their reach and many children and families access services provided regardless of whether they or their children have additional needs. Providing services in

[5] Section 251 refers to a summary of planned and actual expenditure by Local Authorities on a range of services relating to children and young people and is published annually by the Dept. of Education.

this way across 43 centres is already proving difficult to resource and will be impossible to maintain within the context of the Councils financial position.

41. Contact with the most vulnerable families has historically been limited. In 2009, levels of contact with families in the top 30% Super Output Areas (SOAs) was at 20%. This has increased to 65% during 2013 as a result of recent efforts to target support and services to vulnerable families.

42. Although contact with vulnerable families is now showing improvement, there remains a need to ensure services are made more accessible to those families whose children are vulnerable to poor outcomes, but who are often less likely to attend Children's Centre buildings. Improvements to date have been achieved through outreach strategies and the use of a broader range of buildings through which services are delivered.

43. As an example, the outreach model has been working to good effect in the Chester-le-Street Children's Centre cluster. This cluster utilises 9 community venues for service delivery. The approach has achieved significant success in improving contact, particularly with vulnerable children and families and those living in the top 30% areas, which improved from 37% in October 2012 to 72% in January 2014.

Children's Centre Service User Survey

44. A recent service user satisfaction survey canvassed the views and opinions from current service users on the range of services they have used and how they have accessed provision. 58% (421) of the 732 respondents to the survey, who provided their postcode and lived within County Durham, resided within the 30% most deprived communities.

45. Key headline findings based on comparisons of the most and least deprived communities in County Durham include:

- 40% of respondents walked to the Children's Centre; this varied from 47% in the top 30% most deprived communities to 33% in the least.
- Those in the most deprived communities were least likely to drive themselves (40%) compared to those in the least deprived communities (58%).
- This is reflected in those who have access to a car; which ranged from 69% in the most deprived communities to 85% in the least.
- Those living in the most deprived communities were significantly less likely to have used (29% compared to 47%), or would use (21% compared to 37%) breastfeeding activities.
- Over half of those living in the most deprived communities were aged under 30 years old (52%), compared to 42% in the least.

- 54% of those living in the most deprived communities were in employment, compared to 71% of those in the least.
- Half of all respondents in the most deprived communities (50%) have an annual household income of less than £15,599, compared to 29% in the least deprived communities.

46. This highlights the need to improve accessibility across the County, rather than relying on fixed bases.

A New Way of Working – Early Help for Children & Families

47. Giving children the best start in life is a priority for all partner agencies in County Durham. We know that when children fall behind in their social, emotional and educational development in the early years of their lives, they are often unable to catch up and these gaps persist and widen throughout life. It is essential that the service provides the help and support families need to reduce barriers to learning and development later on. Getting it right early on is the right thing to do for children, for their families and for their communities.

48. There are a number of risk factors linked to parenting capacity which can have an adverse impact on outcomes for children, such as negligent or abusive parenting; poor parental mental and/or physical health; smoking during pregnancy; parent has low or no qualifications; criminality and/or anti-social behaviour.

49. Several pieces of research have been carried out which conclude that targeting funding and resources to reduce inequalities in health, education and social care during these formative early years achieves better outcomes than taking a universal approach to the way services and support is provided (see **Appendix 5** for a summary of this research).

50. The Childcare Act 2006 gives Children's Centres their statutory basis and makes it clear that services should be specifically focussed on meeting the needs of families living in the top 30% most disadvantaged SOA's.

51. The Children's Centre Review supports the need to improve service delivery and implement a more targeted use of resource towards families living in the top 30% most deprived areas and to ensure services provided are accessible and within easy reach of those children and their families. To do so will require a new model of working.

52. It is proposed that a targeted approach for children and families during their early years is implemented in County Durham.

53. It is proposed that all children and families living in County Durham will continue to receive Universal Services to support parent and child development. For example, Midwives deliver a range of routine checks with

parents during the ante-natal stages of pregnancy. This includes the provision of advice on nutrition, smoking, alcohol and breastfeeding and provides Midwives with an opportunity to identify parents who may require additional help and support. A final ante-natal appointment is also carried out jointly between the Midwife and a Health Visitor to ensure a smooth transition to their care after birth.

54. Health Visitors deliver the 'Healthy Child Pathway' which consists of seven developmental checks from the ante-natal period just before birth, up to the child's fifth birthday.

55. Daycare and Nursery Providers from the maintained, private and voluntary sectors (including Childminders) also have regular contact with many children from birth onwards. From the age of 2 years those children who would be eligible for free school meals and/or are 'Looked After' and **all** children from age 3 years can access up to 15 hours of early learning opportunities free of charge.

56. These universal contacts provide regular opportunities for practitioners to identify families who have additional needs and children whose development may not be as expected and who would benefit from additional support. It is at these points, following an assessment of need, when Children's Centre provision would be provided and targeted towards the individual needs identified.

57. Through the delivery of a clearly targeted approach, it will be the role of Family Workers and Local Advisory Boards (LABs)[6] to ensure that those parents and children who need support most engage with the services on offer. The main aim of the Local Advisory Boards is to oversee, advise and make recommendations about the development and running of the Children's Centre and ensure a focus on improving outcomes for all children within the 'reach' of the centre and closing the gap between the outcomes for the most disadvantaged children and others.

58. If this targeted approach is not adopted, limited resources will continue to be stretched to cover all children under 5 in the County (currently 27,461), the majority of whom will achieve good outcomes during their early years without additional support

A Community Delivery Model – Taking Services Closer to Families

59. It is proposed to move away from the practice of families coming into Children's Centres to receive services. Instead, a community delivery model is proposed which will make better use of community buildings.

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[6] Local Advisory Boards (LAB) provide Children's Centres with effective governance, vision, sense of purpose and strategic oversight determining the provision offered through the centres.

60. This model will benefit children and families by ensuring services are more easily accessible, closer to where families live by delivering in multi-use community venues which they may already access, for example schools, libraries, community centres, leisure centres etc. Services will be delivered in a more flexible way to meet the changing needs of communities without the current constraints of having 43 fixed Children's Centre buildings.

61. This creates an opportunity to generate additional income to strengthen and help sustain community venues by utilising existing premises suitable for the delivery of Children's Centre services particularly those managed by community and voluntary organisations, as well as broadening the range of services offered at a local level.

62. An example of some of the additional community delivery venues that have been used for Children's Centre service delivery over the past 12 months are set out at **Appendix 6**.

63. Further analysis and public consultation will identify which other community facilities are suitable for the delivery of services and to achieve best reach for families.

Maximising Resources

64. The proposed model reduces reliance on the current fixed Children's Centre buildings, making use instead of an array of community buildings, many of which are already well used by children and their families. This will enable a rationalisation of current Children's Centre buildings and the provision of services within communities closer to the families who most need them.

65. Using the Index of Deprivation 2010 as a key indicator, this report includes a proposal for determining the locations of a reduced number of Children's Centres. This will ensure that our Children's Centres are located where they are most needed and will draw on a range of community provision to successfully engage families in the top 30% most deprived communities and those in greatest need of additional help.

66. Family Worker staffing resource will be deployed using the same methodology as developed to rationalise the buildings. This will ensure an equitable distribution of staffing resource linked to need.

67. The plans will link with corporate developments on asset transfer and buildings rationalisation across the County.

68. It is important to have a good understanding and knowledge of the local areas served and that best use is made of community resources (buildings and people). This will enable the delivery of effective early years provision which meets local needs. This will be done by strengthening Local Advisory Boards which seek to harness the skills and abilities of local people and empower them to influence service delivery. It is envisaged that this partnership

approach with local community members and early year's providers will deliver effective, high quality services that will make a genuine difference to children and families.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

69. The proposals set out in this report are consistent with legislative requirements. The current Children's Centre Statutory Guidance is summarised below:

- **Childcare Act 2006**:
  'A Children's Centre is a place or places through which early childhood services are made available and at which activities for children are provided'.

  The Act makes it clear that services can be provided 'at or through' Children's Centres and that outside of the 30% most disadvantaged SOAs, the level of service provision to be provided will be based on levels of local need and existing provision.

- **Sure Start Statutory Guidance** (DfE April 2013)
  'It is as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas'

  'A network of Children's Centres is accessible to all families with young children in the Local Authority area'

  'Children's Centres and their services are within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport'

  'Children's Centre services are targeted at young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes; and demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively'.

Proposal – The 43 Children's Centres and the 15 it is proposed to retain

70. The Council's Children's Centres are arranged in five localities (see **Table 1** below) to ensure that all areas of the county have a proportion of Children's Centres consistent with their levels of deprivation. No change is proposed to these arrangements.

71. Within the 5 localities, Children's Centres are grouped into 16 'clusters'. Each of the 16 clusters has a "Main" Children's Centre. The cluster arrangement will be retained for management purposes, with the exception of the Coundon cluster which, having only 423 0-4 year olds, is significantly smaller than any of the others. Work to merge the Coundon Cluster with the Bishop Auckland

cluster is underway which will result in the number of clusters reducing to 15, see **Table 1** below

Table 1

Locality	No. 0-4s in top 30% SOAs	Proportion of 15 centres	Number of "Main"centres	Children's Centre Clusters
Consett and Stanley	2478	16.7%	**2**	Consett
				Stanley
Durham and Chester-le-Street	2547	17.2%	**3**	Chester-le-Street
				Deerness Valley
				Durham
Peterlee and Seaham	4477	30.2%	**5**	Easington
				Seaham
				Peterlee East
				Peterlee Central
				Peterlee West
Ferryhill and Newton Aycliffe	2856	19.3%	**3**	Ferryhill
				Spennymoor
				Newton Aycliffe
Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle	2449	16.5%	**2**	Bishop Auckland
				Durham Dales

72. It is proposed to retain one Children's Centre building in each cluster, thereby reducing the number of centres from 43 to 15. These 15 centres, alongside an extensive and flexible network of outreach venues will deliver services across each cluster and provide a base for staff.

73. With the focus on services rather than buildings, it is expected that the proposed community delivery model will improve accessibility for families to Children's Centre services. This has been demonstrated through analysis of travel distances to community venues.

Identifying the centres to be retained

74. A range of factors have informed the proposals regarding which centres should be retained. Within each cluster, these have been taken into account and the centre that represents the 'best fit' and can offer what is needed for that cluster has been proposed.

- **Population**
  - the proportion of children aged 0-4 in the top 30% SOAs in the cluster who live in the centre's 'reach[7]' area;

[7] The Children's Centre Reach refers to the total number of children aged 0-4 living in the geographical area that the Children's Centre serves

- The proportion of all children aged 0-4 in the cluster who live in the centre's 'reach' area.

- **Practical issues:**
  - the building's capacity to deliver services;
  - The building's capacity to accommodate those staff who work in the area.

- **Current use of the Children's Centre building:**
  - the centre in the cluster that had the highest proportion (%) of all visits by children and parents to centres in the cluster between April 2011 and September 2013;
  - The centre in the cluster that had the highest proportion (%) of all visits by children and parents from the top 30% SOAs in the cluster area in the same period.

- **Financial issues**
  - the centre in the cluster subject to the highest level of potential clawback from any funder;
  - the centre in the cluster with the highest level of potential clawback from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
  - whether a centre or space within it, may be needed to accommodate an increase in school places to 2017 (which might represent an opportunity to mitigate against the risk of clawback);
  - Whether a centre, or space within it, may be needed to provide additional space for nursery places for vulnerable 2 year olds (as above).

- **The level of economic and social needs of the centre's reach area:**
  - the centre in the cluster with the highest proportion (%) of 2 year olds in the cluster eligible for free nursery provision;
  - the centre in the cluster with the highest proportion (%) of children living in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance;
  - the centre in the cluster with the highest number per 1000 of children 'in need';
  - the centre in the cluster with the highest number per 1000 of children subject to a child protection plan;
  - The centre in the cluster with the highest number per 1000 of children 'looked after'.

- **The level of achievement of young children in the centre's reach area:**
  - the centre in the cluster with the highest proportion (%) of children in the cluster <u>not</u> judged as achieving a 'good level of development' in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2013 (EYFSP '13);
  - The centre area where the % point gap between children eligible for free school meals and their peers is widest (EYFSP '13).

75. All Children's Centre buildings are relatively new and condition surveys confirm that none require significant capital investment. **Table 2** below summarises the proposal and shows the centres proposed for retention.

Table 2

Locality	Children's Centre (CC) Proposed for Retention	Children's Centre Cluster	Cluster Coverage
Consett and Stanley	**Moorside CC**	Consett	Leadgate, Benfieldside, Moorside and Consett
	Stanley CC	Stanley	Catchgate, Burnhope, Stanley and Craghead
Durham and Chester Le Street	**Bullion Lane CC**	Chester-le-Street	Chester-le-Street and Pelton
	Brandon CC	Deerness Valley	Brandon, Ushaw Moor, Framwellgate Moor and Sacriston
	Laurel Avenue CC	Durham	Sherburn Hill, Durham City, Kelloe
Peterlee and Seaham	**Easington CC**	Easington	Easington, Murton
	Seaham CC	Seaham	Seaham
	Horden CC	Peterlee East	Horden, Blackhall
	Seascape CC	Peterlee Central	Peterlee Centre, Howletch, Dene House
	Wheatley Hill CC	Peterlee West	Wheatley Hill, Wingate, Shotton, Haswell, Thornley
Ferryhill and Newton Aycliffe	**Dean Bank CC**	Ferryhill	Ferryhill, Chilton, Fishburn
	Tudhoe Moor CC	Spennymoor	Tudhoe Moor, Middlestone Moor, West Cornforth, Spennymoor
	Newton Aycliffe CC	Newton Aycliffe	Newton Aycliffe, Shildon
Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle	**St Helen Auckland CC**	Bishop Auckland	Bishop Auckland, St Helen Auckland, Woodhouse Close, Coundon
	Willington CC	Durham Dales	Wear Valley, Teesdale, Weardale

76. Please refer to **Appendix 7** for the full list of Children's Centres proposed for transfer to interest groups/organisations for the continued benefit of children and families.

77. Paragraphs 78 to 154 summarise:

- The basis on which these 15 centres have been identified using the data described in paragraph 74 above.

- The availability of alternative community venues which will facilitate the community delivery model so that access to Children's Centre services is improved.

CONSETT & STANLEY LOCALITY:

1. CONSETT CLUSTER:

Benfieldside, Leadgate and Moorside Children's Centres.

Proposed retained centre : Moorside Children's Centre.

78. Moorside Children's Centre serves both the largest proportion of children overall and the largest proportion in the top 30% Super Output Areas (SOAs). The building is large and offers good capacity for service delivery and is equipped to accommodate staff. It is well situated close to social housing.

79. The centre has the lowest proportion of the visits to centres in this cluster both for all children and for the top 30% SOAs. This is not reflective of a low level of need in the area, but rather indicates the need to make more use of outreach strategies to encourage and support the engagement of children and families access the services and support on offer.

80. Both Moorside and Leadgate centres could be subject to clawback in respect of ERDF funding if they were not retained as a Children's Centre. The centre with the highest level of clawback risk is Moorside by a significant margin. All three Children's Centre areas are projected to require an increase in school and nursery places for vulnerable 2 year olds which could be an opportunity to mitigate the risk of clawback should they be used in this capacity.

81. Moorside has the highest % of 0-4s living in households in receipt of Council Tax Credit or Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance and the highest proportion of children 'in need', children subject to a child protection plan and those 'looked after' and the highest proportion in the cluster of children not judged to have achieved a good level of development (EYFS '13).

2. STANLEY CLUSTER:

Burnhope, Catchgate, Craghead and Stanley Children's Centres.

Proposed retained centre: Stanley Children's Centre.

82. Stanley Children's Centre serves the largest proportion of children in the cluster area by a significant margin.

83. The centre is large and well placed to serve families across the cluster, being located in the town centre. It offers significant capacity for service delivery and is equipped to accommodate staff.

84. The Stanley centre is the busiest of the four, with 65% of all visits by children and parents in the cluster being to this centre.

85. This centre also poses the highest risk of clawback in the cluster should it not be retained as a Children's Centre. All four centre areas are projected as potentially requiring additional nursery places (for 2 year olds). Both

Catchgate and Burnhope Children's Centres are within school buildings and both schools already use some of the space. The Catchgate area has a projected need for additional school places in the future. The Craghead Children's Centre currently houses nursery provision only and other services are delivered from outreach venues including the community centre nearby.

86. The Stanley centre has the highest proportion in the cluster, of children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and the highest number per 1000 of children 'in need', subject to a child protection plan and those 'looked after'. Similarly, it has the highest proportion in the cluster of those children not judged as achieving a 'good level of development' in EYFS Profile 2013 and the largest % point gap between children eligible for free school meals and their peers (EYFSP '13).

87. Over the past 12 months across the Consett & Stanley Locality a total of 12 community venues have been used for Children's Centre service delivery on an outreach basis. This is in addition to Schools in the area. **See Appendix 6**.

DURHAM & CHESTER-LE-STREET LOCALITY:

3. CHESTER-LE-STREET CLUSTER:

Bullion Lane Children's Centre and Pelton Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Bullion Lane Children's Centre (Chester-le-Street).

88. Bullion Lane serves the largest number of children overall and the largest number in the top 30% SOAs.

89. The building offers significant capacity for service delivery and is equipped to accommodate staff. It is located close to social housing and between two local primary schools.

90. More than half of all visits in this cluster are to the Bullion Lane centre.

91. Bullion Lane was the only centre in this area to have had ERDF funding and retaining this centre will mitigate the risk of clawback. Both of the centres are in areas requiring additional nursery places in the future (2 year olds).

92. The centre has the highest proportion of 2 year olds eligible for free nursery provision, the highest proportion of children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and the highest number per 1000 of children 'in need', subject to a child protection plan and those looked after'. Similarly, it has the highest proportion in the cluster of those children not judged as achieving a 'good level of development' and the largest % point gap between children eligible for free school meals and their peers (EYFSP '13).

4. DEERNESS VALLEY CLUSTER:
Brandon, Sacriston and Ushaw Moor Children's Centres.

Proposed retained centre: Brandon Children's Centre

93. Brandon Children's Centre offers the best accommodation for service delivery. It is the best equipped for staff accommodation and is well located, adjoining the primary school within the village. Whilst this centre serves only a quarter of the children in this cluster, it serves a third of those who live in the top 30% SOAs. Additional space was recently secured for service delivery when the nursery moved from the Children's Centre into the school.

94. Brandon is comparable with Ushaw Moor in terms of the proportion of visits taking place across the cluster especially those of families in the top 30% SOAs.

95. There is a risk that not retaining the Ushaw Moor Children's Centre could incur clawback in respect of ERDF funding, though the amount is relatively small. None of the schools linked to these centres are predicted to require additional school places but all three areas are likely to require additional nursery places for 2 year olds.

96. The Brandon Children's Centre area has higher numbers of children per 1000 'in need', subject to a child protection plan and those looked after.

5. DURHAM CLUSTER:
Kelloe Children's Centre, Laurel Avenue Children's Centre, Sherburn Hill Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Laurel Avenue Children's Centre

97. In this cluster, the Laurel Avenue Children's Centre serves the largest proportion of children overall and the largest proportion in the top 30% SOAs.

98. The location of the Laurel Avenue centre is good in that it is attached to the local primary school and community centre and is very close to social housing. The centre offers good space for service delivery and is equipped to accommodate staff.

99. Most of the visits by families in the top 30% SOAs to centres in the cluster are to Laurel Avenue.

100. None of the centres in this cluster would be subject to clawback in respect of ERDF funding.

101. The Laurel Avenue centre serves the largest proportion of 2 year olds eligible for free nursery provision, the highest proportion of children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and the highest number per 1000 of children 'in need' and those subject to a child protection plan. Similarly, the highest proportion in the cluster of those

children not judged as achieving a 'good level of development' in EYFS Profile 2013 live in the Laurel Avenue area.

102. Over the past 12 months across the Durham & Chester-le-Street Locality a total of 22 community venues have been used for Children's Centre service delivery on an outreach basis. This is in addition to Schools in the area. **See Appendix 6**.

PETERLEE & SEAHAM LOCALITY:

6. EASINGTON CLUSTER:

Easington Children's Centre and Murton Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Easington Children's Centre

103. Easington Children's Centre serves the larger proportion in the cluster of children overall and the larger proportion living in the top 30% SOAs.

104. The centre offers the biggest space for service delivery of the two and is equipped to accommodate staff. It is well located in the centre of the village on the site of one of the primary schools.

105. Just over half of the visits by children and families in the top 30% SOAs in this cluster are to the Easington Children's Centre.

106. Neither of the centres are at risk of clawback from ERDF funding. Both centre areas are expected to require additional nursery places for 2 year olds and the Murton area has a projected need for additional school places.

107. The Easington centre area has the larger proportion of 2 year olds eligible for free nursery provision, the highest proportion of children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and the highest number of those subject to a child protection plan. The highest proportion of those children in the cluster not judged as achieving a 'good level of development' in EYFS Profile (2013) live in the Easington centre's area and here, the gap between those children eligible for free school meals and their peers in the EYFS profile is widest.

7. SEAHAM CLUSTER:

Seaham Children's Centre

Proposed retained centre: Seaham Children's Centre

108. There is only one centre, Seaham Children's Centre, in this cluster area which is proposed to be retained.

8. PETERLEE EAST CLUSTER

Blackhall Children's Centre, Horden Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Horden Childrens Centre.

109. Of the two centres in this cluster, Horden serves the larger proportion of children overall and the larger proportion of those living within the top 30% SOAs.

110. The building is the larger and more accessible of the two, with good space for service delivery and accommodation for staff. Over 70% of all visits by children and parents to centres in this cluster area are to the Horden centre.

111. Neither of the centres are at risk of clawback from ERDF funding. Both areas are expected to require additional space for nursery provision for 2 year olds.

112. The Horden centre has the highest proportion of 2 year olds eligible for free nursery provision, the highest proportion of children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and the highest number per 1000 of children 'in need' and those subject to a child protection plan. Additionally it has the highest proportion in the cluster of those children not judged as achieving a 'good level of development' in the EYFS Profile 2013.

9. PETERLEE CENTRAL CLUSTER:

Dene House Children's Centre, Howletch Children's Centre and Seascape Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Seascape Children's Centre (Peterlee)

113. Seascape Children's Centre in Peterlee serves the largest proportion of children overall and the largest proportion in the top 30% SOAs.

114. All three centres in this cluster are small in scale and none offer accommodation for staff who are housed elsewhere in the nearby One Point Hub.

115. While the Howletch centre is the busiest of the three, around a third of visits that families make to centres in this cluster are to the Seascape centre.

116. Both the Dene House centre and Seascape could be subject to clawback from ERDF funding with the amount for Seascape being slightly smaller. All three centres are in areas where additional nursery places for 2 year olds are likely to be needed and the Howletch area is projected to require additional school places.

117. The Seascape area has the highest proportion of 2 year olds eligible for free nursery provision, the highest proportion of children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and the highest number per 1000 of children 'in need' and those subject to a child protection

plan. It also has the highest proportion in the cluster of those children not judged as achieving a 'good level of development' in EYFS Profile 2013.

10. PETERLEE WEST CLUSTER:

Haswell Children's Centre, Shotton Children's Centre, Thornley Children's Centre, Wheatley Hill Children's Centre, Wingate Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Wheatley Hill Children's Centre

118. The decision regarding which Centre to propose for retention is difficult within this cluster because of the need to balance accommodation and service delivery requirements with the data relating to levels of need.

119. Wheatley Hill Children's Centre offers the best space for service delivery and is the only centre in the cluster that can provide staff accommodation.

120. Shotton, Thornley and Wingate Children's Centres are limited in terms of the space they can offer for service delivery.

121. Whilst Wingate Children's Centre came out strong on many of the data indicators, it offers only very limited service delivery space. The centre shares space with the nursery school and an independent Family Centre, both of which offer a range of services to families in the area. Outreach will continue to be particularly important in this area to make sure that each of these small but distinct communities can access the services they need.

122. Each of the five Children's Centres that make up this cluster area, serve a small number of children overall, with the largest proportion living within the reach area for the Wingate centre.

123. The busiest centre is Shotton with a little over a quarter of all visits to centres taking place here. The Wingate centre offers so little space for service delivery, it has not been considered as an option to be retained despite being an area where the level of need is great (see section 121).

124. Three of the five centres here could be subject to clawback from ERDF with the largest amount being in respect of Haswell Children's Centre. With the exception of Shotton all five are in areas projected to need additional capacity for nursery provision for 2 year olds and both Shotton and Thornley are predicted to require additional school places.

125. The Wingate area has the highest proportion of 2 year olds eligible for free nursery provision, while the Shotton area has the highest proportion of children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance. Wingate has the highest number per 1000 of children 'in need' and those subject to a child protection plan while the Haswell area has the higher number per 1000 of those looked after'. Early learning outcomes (EYFS '13) are worst in the Shotton area while the gap between children eligible for free school meals and their peers is widest in Thornley.

126. Over the past 12 months across the Peterlee & Seaham Locality a total of 36 community venues have been used for Children's Centre service delivery on an outreach basis. This is in addition to Schools in the area. **See Appendix 6**.

FERRYHILL & NEWTON AYCLIFFE LOCALITY:

11. FERRYHILL CLUSTER:

Chilton Children's Centre, Dean Bank Children's Centre, Fishburn Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Dean Bank Children's Centre.

127. The Dean Bank centre serves the largest proportion of those living in the top 30% SOAs.

128. The Dean Bank centre offers the largest space for service delivery and is equipped to accommodate staff.

129. None of the centres are at risk from the clawback of ERDF funding.

130. Only the Chilton area requires additional space for nursery provision and none of the centres are linked to schools requiring additional places.

131. The Dean Bank area fares worst in six of the seven indicators linked to social and learning needs including having the highest proportion of 2 year olds eligible for free nursery provision, children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and children per 1000 'in need', 'in need of protection' and 'looked after'. It also has the largest proportion of children not judged to have reached a good level of development (EYFS '13).

12. SPENNYMOOR CLUSTER:

Middlestone Moor Children's Centre, Tudhoe Moor Children's Centre, West Cornforth Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Tudhoe Moor Children's Centre

132. Tudhoe Moor Children's Centre serves the largest proportion of those in the top 30% SOAs in this cluster.

133. None of the centres in this cluster offer accommodation for staff who are based elsewhere. Tudhoe Moor Children's Centre offers the best space for service delivery of the three.

134. Tudhoe Moor is the busiest of the three centres with most visits by families in the cluster being to this centre.

135. None of the centres are at risk from the clawback of ERDF funding. Middlestone Moor is projected to need additional school places and all three centres in this cluster have a projected need for additional nursery places for 2 year olds.

136. A larger proportion of children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance, children per 1000 'in need' and children not having reached a good level of development (EYFS '13), live in the Tudhoe Moor area. An equivalent number per 1000 children subject to a child protection plan live in the Tudhoe Moor and Middlestone Moor areas.

13. NEWTON AYCLIFFE CLUSTER:

Newton Aycliffe Children's Centre, Shildon Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Newton Aycliffe Children's Centre

137. The Newton Aycliffe centre serves the largest proportion of children overall and the largest proportion of those in the top 30% SOAs.

138. Both centres are small and neither offers space for staff accommodation. Staff are based in the nearby One Point Hub.

139. Newton Aycliffe is the busier centre by a significant margin with three quarters of all visits by families in the cluster being to this centre. It is located on the site of a primary school and within reach of social housing and the town centre.

140. Neither centre presents a risk from clawback in respect of ERDF funding. Both are predicted to need additional nursery places for 2 year olds and the Shildon centre is on the site of a school projected to need additional school places.

141. The Newton Aycliffe area has the larger proportion of 2 year olds eligible for free nursery provision and children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and the larger proportion of children per 1000 subject to a child protection plan. The larger proportion of those not having reached a good level of development (EYFS '13), live in the Newton Aycliffe area.

142. Over the past 12 months across the Ferryhill & Newton Aycliffe Locality a total of 24 community venues have been used for Children's Centre service delivery on an outreach basis. This is in addition to Schools in the area. **See Appendix 6**.

BISHOP AUCKLAND & BARNARD CASTLE LOCALITY:

14. BISHOP AUCKLAND CLUSTER:

Coundon Children's Centre, St Helen Auckland Children's Centre, Woodhouse Close Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: St Helen Auckland Children's Centre

143. In this cluster, the St Helen Auckland centre serves the largest proportion of children overall while the highest proportion of those in the top 30% SOAs, live in the Woodhouse Close Children's Centre area.

144. These two centres are similar in size and both offer good space for service delivery. The One Point Hub for the area is located very close to the Woodhouse Close Children's Centre. St Helen's offers the best accommodation option for staff. The Coundon Children's Centre is the smallest in this cluster and while it is not proposed to be retained as a Children's Centre, being within a multi-purpose building could offer suitable space for use as an outreach venue.

145. All three of the centres here were developed with significant amounts of ERDF funding. All three areas are projected to require additional nursery places for 2 year olds while none need additional school places.

146. The largest proportion of those children in the cluster who do not achieve a good level of development (EYFS '13) live in the St Helen Auckland area.

147. All three of these centres make good use of venues in their areas for the delivery of Children's Centre services, both to extend their immediate reach and to take services to communities in Henknowle, Leeholme and Dene Valley.

15. DURHAM DALES CLUSTER:

Evenwood Children's Centre, Middleton in Teesdale Children's Centre, Weardale (Stanhope) Children's Centre, Willington Children's Centre.

Proposed retained centre: Willington Children's Centre

148. Of these four centres, Willington serves the largest number of children overall and the largest number in the top 30%ID SOAs by a significant margin.

149. The building at Willington offers the biggest space for service delivery and is equipped to accommodate staff. It is located in the most densely populated area in the cluster, close to the main street, primary school and health centre.

150. Almost two thirds of all visits by families in the top 30% SOAs in this cluster are to the Willington centre.

151. None of the centres in this cluster area have had ERDF funding. Only the Willington area requires additional nursery places for 2 year olds and none require additional school places.

152. The Willington area has the highest proportion of 2 year olds eligible for free nursery provision, children in households in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and the highest number per 1000 of children 'in need', subject to a child protection plan and those looked after'. Almost two thirds of children in the cluster were not judged as achieving a 'good level of development' (EYFS Profile 2013).

153. Each of the centres in this cluster already uses a very extensive network of outreach venues to take services to families living in very rural and often very isolated communities. The Teesdale Play Bus further extends the capacity of the service to reach the most isolated communities offering play and early learning activities for children and families, services for children with additional needs and some 1 : 1 support.

154. Over the past 12 months across the Bishop Auckland & Barnard Castle Locality a total of 23 community venues and a mobile playbus facility have been used for Children's Centre service delivery on an outreach basis. This is in addition to Schools in the area. **See Appendix 6**.

Travel Time and Distance

155. Travel time using public transport is an effective measure to determine the accessibility of services and identify gaps in provision.

156. Analysis has been carried out for each of the proposed 15 cluster areas identifying the percentage of households that are within 1 mile of their nearest potential outreach venue or within a 20 minute journey on public transport. The outcome of this analysis is positive with between 96-100% of all households being able to access a potential community venue.

Rurality:

157. It is recognised that rural areas, in particular Weardale and Teesdale, present their own challenges; however there is already a well-established network of outreach venues being used for Children's Centre service delivery in these areas. For example, for families who live in St John's Chapel, there is potential for a Children's Centre programme to be delivered through St John's Chapel Primary School, Upper Weardale Town Hall, Westgate Youth club, Stanhope Community Association, Stanhope Barrington CofE Primary School. In addition, the Teesdale Play Bus enables families, even in the most rural areas, to access activities and free transport to Children's Centre activities is also provided for those families who need it. **Appendix 6** sets out a range of other potential service delivery venues for all other localities.

158. Public consultation on the proposals will seek to further inform our analysis both in terms of the feasibility of some of the community venues identified and also in relation to accessibility.

Mitigating the reduction in capacity for service delivery

159. Despite a proposed reduction in the number of Children's Centres, the capacity to deliver services will increase rather than decrease, as services are delivered within existing community resources using an outreach model of service delivery. Further work is ongoing to assess the additional community venues for their suitability. In this way the service will be playing a part in helping to sustain community resources and contributing to the local economy.

Financial Implications - Potential for Funding Clawback

160. Children's Centres were developed using a variety of available funding streams, namely:-

- Sure Start Capital Grant
- Children's Centre Capital Grant
- Schools Devolved Capital Grant
- European Regional Development Fund
- New Opportunities Funding
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
- Single Regeneration Budget
- Primary Care Trust
- Sedgefield Borough Council

161. There are 23 different funding combinations of the above funding streams across the 43 centres. The total development costs for the 43 centres were £31,585,165.

162. Many of these funding streams have potential clawback restrictions and this has been given consideration when identifying those centres it is proposed to transfer. This ensures that, the new service model is financially viable.

163. Clawback may be invoked if the Children's Centre building is used for a different purpose to that agreed when the funding was awarded.

Mitigating Clawback Risk

164. A detailed analysis has been completed in relation to the risk of clawback. This can be mitigated by identifying appropriate alternative uses for the Children's Centres proposed for transfer to ensure services for children and families can continue to be delivered.

165. The first preference will be to identify whether the proposed transfer of a Children's Centre would present schools with an opportunity to address a

shortage of school places to meet future pupil rolls. Additional potential for schools could be through utilising the space to enhance EYFS outcomes through the delivery of the 2 year offer or to expand services such as breakfast clubs and wrap around support. Of the 28 buildings proposed for transfer, 23 are on school sites.

166. Other options include:-

- Explore with Daycare providers currently delivering from Children's Centres, the feasibility of them taking over (through potential lease arrangement) the Children's Centre to provide daycare including 2 year old places;
- Explore the potential for future shared use of buildings and shared cost of utilising Libraries, Youth Centres, Leisure Centres and community buildings within DCC;
- Identify DCC office accommodation requirements and whether such an arrangement would facilitate some ongoing Children's Centre delivery and;
- Explore with community groups the potential for the transfer of the building to community ownership whilst at the same time providing some level of continued Children's Centre service delivery.

167. All options for alternative use of the Children's Centre buildings will be explored as part of the consultation process.

Buildings and Staffing Implications

168. The proposals set out in this report seek to reduce the number of Children's Centre buildings from 43 to 15 and instead utilise other community buildings and facilities in local areas, which will enable the provision of services through a community delivery model

169. Based on the buildings identified in this proposal, the reduction in proposed Children's Centres will result in an overall saving of approximately £1 million based on those centres identified. This will be achieved through the associated reduction in building and maintenance costs and changes to staffing.

170. The ongoing service delivery requirements necessitates a reconfiguration of the current staffing resource in order to provide a more flexible service to meet the needs of children and families in accordance with the more targeted approach and also to contribute to the current MTFP requirements for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

171. The current staffing structure will be reconfigured to ensure the staffing resource is proportionate and fit for purpose, in particular that there are sufficient numbers of Family Workers to deliver the new model. The reconfiguration of staffing resource will seek to ensure minimal impact on staff numbers.

Consultation:

172. A full 12 week public consultation process is proposed and the consultation plan is attached at **Appendix 8**. The consultation will focus on the following :-

- The community delivery model
- The 43 Children's Centres and the 15 it is proposed to retain

173. The proposed consultation exercise will run for 12 weeks, following which a full analysis will be undertaken and a further report will be provided to Cabinet in Spring 2015 incorporating all of the information gathered and presenting final recommendations.

174. The consultation process will involve a range of stakeholders who have an interest in this review and a range of consultation methods will be used to maximise involvement and participation levels from all interested parties. A full list of key stakeholders it is proposed to consult with is included in **Appendix 8.**

Equality Impact Assessment

175. The Equality Act 2010 includes a Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public authorities to pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity;
- Foster good relations.

176. The proposed Children's Centre Review supports our commitment to equality.

177. An initial screening of the Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken (**Appendix 9**). A full assessment will be progressed following consultation which will address issues raised by stakeholders during the consultation period in relation to impact.

Conclusion:

178. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan requires savings of £224 million over the period 2011 to 2017. The Council is now having to review all services to ensure they are cost effective and fit for purpose.

179. The report proposes a reduction in the number of Children's Centre buildings from 43 to 15. The centres proposed for retention and transfer have been identified following detailed analysis of a range of data.

180. A new service model is proposed that will reduce the cost base of the service and at the same time increase access to services and protect service delivery.

This will be done by shifting the emphasis from the provision of buildings to the provision of services and by making better use of existing buildings in the heart of communities to deliver services close to where children and families live.

181. In undertaking this review, account has been taken of:-

- The evolution of Children's Centres;
- An analysis of need relating to deprivation;
- The impact of Children's Centres in relation to social, economic and learning outcomes;
- OfSTED inspection outcomes;
- Views of service users;
- Required efficiency savings.

182. Cabinet are being asked to agree to a full 12 week public consultation exercise, during which it is proposed that we will consult on the following:-

- The community delivery model
- The 43 Children's Centres and the 15 it is proposed to retain

183. Following the consultation period, a further report will be provided to Cabinet, in Spring 2015, which will make final recommendations with regards to retention and transfer of Children's Centre buildings and which will include a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Recommendations:

184. Cabinet is recommended to agree to:-

1. A public consultation commencing 31 July 2014 for 12 weeks until 23 October 2014 which will present the proposals to all key stakeholders, paying particular attention to current and potential service users.

2. That the consultation will seek the views and opinions of all key stakeholders on:-

    - The community delivery model
    - The 43 Children's Centres and the 15 it is proposed to retain

3. The presentation of a final report to Cabinet in Spring 2015, making recommendations following consultation and including a full Equality Impact Assessment.

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LIST OF APPENDICES:-

Appendix 1	Implications
Appendix 2	Children's Centre 'Reach' by Locality
Appendix 3	IPF 'Reach' Comparison Table
Appendix 4	OFSTED Inspection Outcomes
Appendix 5	Summary of Research
Appendix 6	Community Delivery Venues
Appendix 7	Children's Centres Proposed for Transfer
Appendix 8	Consultation Plan
Appendix 9	Equality Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND PAPERS
The following background papers are available and can be provided upon request:-

1. Chester-le-Street Children's Centre Cluster Timetable
2. Children's Centre Service User Survey
3. Case Studies which provide examples of a targeted approach leading to improved outcomes
4. Maps of outreach provision available in each of the 15 Clusters that show potential accessibility of Children's Centre service within a 1 mile walk or 20 minute bus journey

Appendix 1 - Implications

Finance
The proposals would enable efficiency savings in line with the County Council's Medium term Financial Plan (MTFP). The specific proposals in this report would deliver approximately £1 million from a rationalisation of buildings and a restructure of the staff resource designed to maximise savings whilst minimising reduction in the number of posts.

Staffing
A re-configuration of the staffing resource through a full HR exercise will be undertaken in 2014/15 in line with the County Council's Policies and Procedures. This will not pre-determine the outcome of the proposed consultation or any decisions about Children's Centre buildings.

Risk
There is a potential financial risk associated with the clawback of funding. The Project Team has maintained a 'risk log' to highlight any concerns regarding the progress of the review and this is considered on a weekly basis.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty
An Initial Screening of the Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be complete following the proposed consultation and will be updated as the Project progresses.

Accommodation
The proposals to reduce the number of Children's Centre buildings could result in changes to accommodation arrangements.

Crime and Disorder - N/A

Human Rights - N/A

Consultation
It is proposed that a 12 week consultation programme be undertaken which would involve all internal and external stakeholders.

Procurement - N/A

Disability Issues
An Initial Screening of the Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be complete following the proposed consultation and will be updated as the Project progresses. It takes consideration of the proposals on all stakeholders, regardless of their ethnicity, disability, etc.

Legal Implications
A full consultation programme is proposed that aims to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations.

Appendix 2: CHILDREN'S CENTRE REACH BY LOCALITY

Locality	Reach[8]				
	Number of 0-4 year olds	No. of 0-4 yr olds in top 30% most deprived areas (ID10)	% in top 30%	Cluster	Children's Centres
Consett and Stanley	4961	2478	50%	Consett	Leadgate, Benfieldside, Moorside
				Stanley	Stanley, Burnhope, Catchgate, Craghead
Durham and Chester-le-Street	7178	2547	35%	Chester-le-Street	Bullion Lane, Pelton
				Deerness Valley	Brandon, Ushaw Moor, Sacriston
				Durham	Laurel Avenue, Kelloe, Sherburn Hill
Peterlee and Seaham	5657	4477	79%	Seaham	Seaham,
				Easington	Easington, Murton,
				Peterlee East	Horden, Blackhall
				Peterlee Central	Seascape (Peterlee), Dene House, Howletch
				Peterlee West	Wheatley Hill, Shotton, Thornley, Wingate, Haswell
Ferryhill and Newton Aycliffe	4966	2856	58%	Ferryhill	Dean Bank, Chilton, Fishburn
				Newton Aycliffe	Newton Aycliffe, Shildon
				Spennymoor	Tudhoe Moor, Middlestone Moor, West Cornforth, Spennymoor
Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle	4699	2449	53%	Bishop Auckland	Woodhouse Close, St Helen Auckland, Coundon
				Durham Dales	Willington, Evenwood, Middleton in Teesdale, Weardale(Stanhope)
TOTAL	27,461	14,807			

[8] The "reach" refers to the total number of children under the age of 4 who live within the geographical area covered by the centre.

Appendix 3 - IPF 'Reach' Comparison Table

At 639, County Durham's average 'reach[9]' per Children's Centre, is currently significantly lower than those of other Local Authorities in our IPF Benchmark Group. On average, these Local Authorities have an average reach of 1,112, which is almost twice that of our current figure. The largest reach figure (3,169 in Sunderland), has been brought about by their recent review of Children's Centres which has resulted in merging their 17 Centres into 5 large Centres working through a range of 'outreach' venues. See Table 1 below.

Position	IPF Benchmark Group - current	No Under 5's	No centres Sept '11	Average reach	No centres current	Average reach
1	Durham	27461	43	639	43	639
2	Barnsley	13623	19	717	20	681
3	St Helens	10092	12	841	12	841
4	Wakefield	19918	23	866	23	866
5	Doncaster	17787	21	847	20	889
6	Wigan	18160	20	908	20	908
7	Gateshead	11175	15	745	12	931
8	North Tyneside	11556	12	963	12	963
9	Stockton on Tees	12450	11	1132	12	1038
10	Darlington	6587	6	1098	5	1317
11	Sunderland	15844	17	932	5	3169

[9] The "reach" refers to the total number of children under the age of 4 who live within the geographical area covered by the centre.

Appendix 4 – Children's Centres OfSTED Inspection Outcomes

Locality	Children's centre	Date of inspection	Overall Effectiveness
Peterlee & Seaham	Blackhall	Oct. '10	Good
Peterlee & Seaham	Seaham	Nov. '10	Satisfactory
Bishop Auckland & Barnard Castle	Coundon	Jan. '11	Good
Peterlee & Seaham	Seascape	Feb. '11	Good
Peterlee & Seaham	Haswell	Feb. '11	Good
Durham & Chester-le-Street	Kelloe	Mar. '11	Satisfactory
Peterlee & Seaham	Wheatley Hill	Mar. '11	Good
Bishop Auckland & Barnard Castle	Evenwood	Mar. '11	Good
Bishop Auckland & Barnard Castle	Middleton	Mar. '11	Good
Ferryhill & Newton Aycliffe	Dean Bank	Mar. '11	Good
Bishop Auckland & Barnard Castle	Stanhope	Mar. '11	Good
Peterlee & Seaham	Howletch	April '11	Good
Peterlee & Seaham	Wingate	April '11	Satisfactory
Ferryhill & Newton Aycliffe	Chilton	April '11	Good
Consett & Stanley	Moorside	Jan. '12	Satisfactory
Consett & Stanley	Stanley	Feb '12	Satisfactory
Peterlee & Seaham	Shotton	Feb '12	Good
Durham & Chester-le-Street	Ushaw Moor	April '12	Satisfactory
Bishop Auckland & Barnard Castle	Willington	May '12	Good
Consett & Stanley	Burnhope	June '12	Inadequate
Peterlee & Seaham	Horden	June '12	Satisfactory
Ferryhill & Newton Aycliffe	Shildon	Sept. '12	Satisfactory
Bishop Auckland & Barnard Castle	St Helen's	Oct '12	Satisfactory
Peterlee & Seaham	Thornley	Oct '12	Satisfactory
Consett & Stanley	Benfieldside	Oct '12	Satisfactory
Ferryhill & Newton Aycliffe	Tudhoe Moor	Oct '12	Satisfactory
Consett & Stanley	Leadgate	Jan '13	Satisfactory
Durham & Chester-le-Street	Sacriston	Jan '13	Satisfactory

Locality	Children's centre	Date of inspection	Overall Effectiveness
Durham & Chester-le-Street	Laurel Avenue	Jan '13	Satisfactory
Peterlee & Seaham	Dene House	Feb '13	Satisfactory
Ferryhill & Newton Aycliffe	Fishburn	Feb '13	Satisfactory
Peterlee & Seaham	Murton	Feb '13	Satisfactory
Ferryhill & Newton Aycliffe	Middlestone Moor	Mar '13	Satisfactory
New Inspection Framework – April 2013			
Durham & Chester-le-Street	CLS Cluster (Bullion Lane/Pelton) Group	November '13	Requires improvement
Durham & Chester-le-Street	Deerness Valley Cluster (Brandon, Sacriston & Ushaw Moor CC)	January '14	Good

Appendix 5 – Research into Targeted Funding/Interventions

Summary of Research

1.0 Marmot (2010) 'Review, Fair Societies, Healthy Lives' describes how health inequalities result from social inequalities. With the establishment of One Point and commitment from our partners within the Children's and Families Trust, particularly the rich resource within the Voluntary and Community Sector, assurances can be made that universal and targeted services can be delivered using popular community buildings and in the home as appropriate.

2.0 Graham Allen, 'Review of Early Intervention' (July 2011) comments that "for all emphasis on Early Intervention Programmes, the role of mainstream local health services will always provide the earliest and strongest filters of dysfunction". This supports the universal element of the proposed model safeguarding the identification of our most vulnerable families using our health colleagues to then target Children Centre resource more effectively.

3.0 An independent report on the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' carried out by Dame Clare Tickell (March 2011) shows that early identification of need followed by appropriate support is the most effective approach to tackling disadvantage and helping children overcome specific obstacles to learning.

4.0 In 2010 Frank Field, MP carried out a 'Review on Poverty and Life Chances' and found overwhelming evidence suggesting that children's life chances are greatly predicted on their first five years of life. The evidence indicates that children are more likely to realise their potential in adult life by the following factors rather than money: family background; parental education; good parenting; opportunities for learning. Within County Durham and the existing resources available to us assurances can be provided that the 'core purpose' tackling the above factors will continue to be addressed however this can be achieved using an outreach model and partnership approach.

5.0 In Professor Munro's 'Progress Report: Moving Towards a Child Centred System' (May 2012) she builds on 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2010) and describes the importance of working together as individually professionals have only a partial picture of the child's life and the full extent of the danger and needs can be hidden until they share their knowledge. This emphasises the importance for partners to ensure that systems and processes for timely information sharing are in place rather than the importance of buildings and where services are delivered.

Appendix 6 – Potential Community Delivery Venues

Community Delivery Venues

The use of community venues to increase the capacity of Children's Centres to reach out to their communities is well established. The table below lists those venues that have been used over the past 12 months for Children's Centre service delivery.

It is anticipated however that through the Consultation the network of outreach venues will be further defined informed by local intelligence.

The lists do not include schools which provide the potential for a further 260 venues (226 Primary Schools and 34 Secondary Schools).

Locality	Children's Centre Proposed to Retain	Community Delivery Venues	
Consett and Stanley	Stanley Children's Centre	Annfield Plain Library	One Point Hub, Stanley
	Moorside Children's Centre	Craghead Village Hall	Quaking Houses Village Hall
		Delves Lane Community Centre/Village Hall	Queen's Road Surgery
		Lanchester Community Centre	South Stanley Community Centre
		Lanchester Library	St Stephen's Hall
		One Point Hub, Consett	Tesco Community Room

Locality	Children's Centre Proposed to Retain	Community Delivery Venues	
Durham and Chester-le-Street	Bullion Lane Children's Centre	Arden House	Coxhoe Village Hall
	Brandon Children's Centre	Bearpark Community Centre	Grange Villa Enterprise Centre
	Laurel Avenue Children's Centre	Bowburn Community Centre	Great Lumley Community Centre
		Bowburn Library	Heel and Toe
		Bowburn Methodist Church	Lavender Centre, Pelton
		Brockwell Centre, Pelton Fell	Meadowfield Daycare
		Carrside Youth Centre, Brandon	Nettlesworth Community Centre
		Chester-le-Street Leisure Centre	One Point Hub, Chester-le-Street
		Chester-le-Street Library	Pelton Community Centre
		Cornerstones	Pelton Library
		Coxhoe Community Centre	Sacriston Medical Centre

Locality	Children's Centre Proposed to Retain	Community Delivery Venues	
Peterlee and Seaham	Easington Children's Centre	Arbroath House Surgery	Peterlee Leisure Centre
	Horden Children's Centre	Blackhall Library	Peterlee Library
	Seascape Children's Centre	Blackhall Resource Centre	Plants 'R' Ross
	Seaham Children's Centre	Easington Colliery Library	Robin Todd Community Centre
	Wheatley Hil Children's Centre	Easington Social Welfare Centre	Seaham Contact Centre
		Eastlea Community Centre	Seaham Leisure Centre
		Edenhill Outreach Centre	Seaham Library
		Healthworks	Seaham Youth Centre
		Hill Rigg House	Seaview Outreach Centre
		Holy Trinity Church Hall	Seaview School Pool
		Horden Library	'Spyral'
		Horden St. Mary's Church Hall	Station Town Methodist Church Hall
		Horden Youth and Communtiy Centre	The Ark
		Macrae House, Murton	The Glebe Centre, Murton
		Murton Library	The Pavillion
		Murton Resource Centre	Wingate Community Centre
		One Point Hub, Peterlee	Wingate Family Centre
		Parkside Community Centre	Wingate Training Base

Locality	Children's Centre Proposed to Retain	Community Delivery Venues	
Ferryhill and Newton Aycliffe	Dene Bank Children's Centre	Burnhill Community Centre	One Point Hub, Ferryhill
	Newton Aycliffe Children's Centre	Chilton Community College	One Point Hub, Newton Aycliffe
		Chilton Health Centre	Shildon Methodist Church Hall
	Tudhoe Moor Children's Centre	Ferryhill and Dean Bank Institute	Spennymoor Health Centre
		Ferryhill Clinic	Spennymoor Leisure Centre
		Ferryhill Station Outreach Centre	Spennymoor Library
		Fishburn Church Hall	Sunnydale Leisure Centre, Shildon
		Fishburn Welfare Hall	The Rest House, Shildon
		Jubilee Field's Community Centre, Shildon	Trimdon Grange Community Centre
		Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre	Trimdon Station Community Centre
		Newton Aycliffe Library	Trimdon Village Hall
		Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre	Tudhoe Community Centre

Locality	Children's Centre Proposed to Retain	Community Delivery Venues	
Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle	St Helen Auckland Children's Centre	Barnard Castle Outreach Centre	One Point Hub, Bishop Auckland
		Bowes Village Hall	Spectrum Leisure Complex
	Willington Children's Centre	Busy Base Outreach Centre, Eldon Lane	Stainton Grove Community Centre
		Cockfield Outreach Centre	Taylor Road Outreach Centre, Bishop
		Cockton Hill Methodist Church	Tees Walk
		Cotherstone Village Hall	Teesdale Playbus
		Coundon Library	Tow Law Community Centre
		Crook Outreach	Tow Law Outreach
		Dene Valley One Stop Shop	UTASS
		Leeholme Welfare Hall	West Durham Youth and Community Resource
		Middleton-in- Teesdale Village Hall	Woodhouse Close Leisure Centre
		One Point Hub, Barnard Castle	Woodhouse Close Methodist and Church

Appendix 7 - Children's Centres Proposed for Transfer

Please note that as part of the proposed consultation alternative uses for these buildings will be sought ensuring, where possible, that some level of children's services will continue to be delivered.

Locality	**Cluster**	**Children's Centres (CC) Proposed for Transfer**
Consett and Stanley	Consett	Leadgate Benfieldside
	Stanley	Burnhope Catchgate Craghead
Durham and Chester-le-Street	Chester le Street	Pelton
	Deerness Valley	Ushaw Moor Sacriston
	Durham	Kelloe Sherburn Hill
Peterlee and Seaham	Easington	Murton
	Seaham	N/A
	Peterlee East	Blackhall
	Peterlee Central	Dene House Howletch
	Peterlee West	Haswell Shotton Thornley Wingate
Ferryhill and Newton Aycliffe	Ferryhill	Chilton Fishburn
	Spennymoor	Middlestone Moor West Cornforth
	Newton Aycliffe	Shildon
Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle	Bishop Auckland	Woodhouse Close Coundon
	Durham Dales	Evenwood Middleton in Teesdale Weardale(Stanhope)

Appendix 8 – Consultation Plan

1. Introduction

This document describes how the Council will consult on a proposed new approach to Children's Centre Service Delivery in County Durham.

It is proposed that we will consult on :-

- The community delivery model – Putting services closer to families;
- The proposal for the 43 children's centre buildings and the 15 it is proposed to retain.

2. Background

There are currently 43 Children's Centres in County Durham which were developed using the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 to 2007 to ensure that centres were situated closest to those families experiencing significant disadvantage across a range of indicators such as income, health, education and housing.

The One Point Service currently manages Children's Centres in five geographical areas (localities) and the Service brings together Integrated Health and Local Authority Services.

Children's Centres have played an important part in the lives of children and families across County Durham towns and villages over the last 10 years, and a wide range of services and support has been available. However, despite the availability of these services, County Durham's children are less ready to start school and fewer achieve a good level of development at the end of the reception year than others in the region and nationally.

In addition, the council is facing the challenge of significant cuts to public funding and the Council's current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) requires it to make savings of approximately £222m from 2011- 2017. The total 2014/15 and 2015/16 MTFP savings target attached to this review amount to approximately £1 million, but the proposals outlined in the review will improve service delivery and enable children and families to continue to access the full range of Children's Centre services in more venues. To do this, we are proposing a community based model which will provide us with a service which is more flexible and can better meet the needs of children and families who need additional support.

Reducing the number of Children's Centres whilst increasing our use of community buildings as outreach venues for service delivery, will ensure continued support for children and families to achieve improved outcomes throughout their earlier years. Despite the proposed reduction of Children's Centres, the community based model will mean services will be delivered in more venues, not less. Resource will be spent on people not buildings.

The purpose of the Children's Centre Review Project is to ensure that Durham County

Council's Children and Adults Services robustly and objectively review the current provision of Children's Centres in line with the Early Years Strategy and the requirements of the County Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

3. Timescales

The proposed consultation exercise will run for 12 weeks and will start on 31 July 2014 until 23 October 2014. A full analysis of the consultation results will then be undertaken and a report will be presented to Cabinet in Spring 2015.

As the consultation includes the school summer holiday period, this will provide us with opportunities to successfully engage with parents and children that will be participating in Children's Centre summer activities. However, we intend to re-launch the consultation week beginning 8 September 2014 to maximise engagement from all interested parties.

4. Contact Officer

The Project Manager for the Children's Centre Review is Fiona Smith who has established various Workstreams to manage and deliver aspects of the Project.

Contact Details:

Fiona Smith
Children's Centre Review Project Manager
Tel: 03000 26 16 70 (VPN)
Mob: 07769239687
Email: fiona.smith@durham.gov.uk

5. Stakeholders (please list)

The consultation process will involve a range of stakeholders who have an interest in this review and a range of consultation methods will be used to maximise involvement and participation levels from all interested parties. Stakeholder groups include :-

Area Action Partnerships (AAPs)

Children under 5

Children and Families Partnership

Daycare Providers

DfE

Health partners

- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- (North Durham CCG, Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCG)

- Foundation Trusts:
- (Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust)
- NHS Commissioning Board Local Area Team - Durham, Darlington and Tees
- Public Health England

Local Advisory Boards

Members

- All Members
- Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Members of Parliament

OFSTED

Parents

- Parents of children under 5, including young parents and parents with a disability.
- Parents who use daycare in Children's Centres

Schools

- Head Teachers
- Governing Bodies

Staff

- One Point staff (LA and Health)
- Wider staff within CAS
- Other DCC staff

Town and Parish Councils

Voluntary and Community sector organisations

6. Consultation Process and Methods

A variety of methods will be used during the consultation to enable all stakeholders to actively participate and the attached action plan details the specific planned activity (see **Appendix A**). This will include :-

- Focus Groups
- Activity Sessions
- Questionnaires
- Parent's Forums/consultation events
- Presentations

7. Geographical Area

This review affects the whole County as there are currently Children's Centre buildings in all electoral wards/divisions. The consultation aims to gather feedback from all interested parties and will be open to all stakeholders who are directly affected by the proposal.

What we need to say

Our Vision
Durham County Council is committed to providing high quality services to support families and their young children to be healthy, ready for school and achieve their full potential and Children's Centre services have an important part to play in this. We propose to change the way we work to target support to children and families who need the support the most.

Key Principles
We will maintain 15 Children's Centres across County Durham enabling us to continue to deliver Children's Centre services by applying the following key principles:-

1. Help those children and families most in need of support as early as possible;
2. Involve children, families and partners in helping to shape our services;
3. Deliver services in places that are as close as possible to where children and families live;
4. Focus our resources on frontline staff rather than on buildings.

The Community Delivery Model – Putting services closer to families

We want to make our service more accessible to children and families by delivering them closer to where families live. We want to do this by making better use of community buildings and facilities like libraries, schools, leisure and community centres, for the delivery of services to support children and families during their early years. This will move away from the requirement for families to come into Children's Centres to access support and services.

The 43 Children's Centres are currently grouped in to 15 "clusters". The proposal is that we maintain one main Children's Centre in each cluster. This will reduce the number of Children's Centres we have in County Durham from 43 to 15. These centres alongside an extensive and flexible network of community venues will deliver services across the cluster and provide a base for staff. We will seek to find alternative uses for the other 28 centres to ensure services benefiting children and families can continue to be delivered.

The main centre would accommodate staff to be able to coordinate services across each cluster using a number of community venues in addition to home visits. These are the places families tell us they already go to. Services will therefore be available from more venues, not less.

This will improve the flexibility of service delivery whilst reducing the Children's Centre building costs for the Council and protect front line staff and services.

The proposal for the 43 children's centre buildings and the 15 it is proposed to retain

The One Point Service manages Children's Centres across five localities covering all of County Durham. Within the five localities Children's Centres are grouped into 15 clusters. The proposal is that we maintain one main Children's Centre in each cluster which would reduce the number of centres from 43 to 15.

We have made recommendations on which Children's Centre buildings should be retained in each cluster. The table below outlines these recommendations :-

Locality	Cluster	Proposed Children's Centre to retain	Current Children's Centres
Consett and Stanley	Consett	Moorside Children's Centre	Benfieldside, Leadgate, Moorside
	Stanley	Stanley Children's Centre	Burnhope, Catchgate, Craghead, Stanley
Durham and Chester-le-Street	Chester-le-Street	Bullion Lane Children's Centre	Bullion Lane, Pelton
	Deerness Valley	Brandon Children's Centre	Brandon, Sacriston, Ushaw Moor
	Durham	Laurel Avenue Children's Centre	Kelloe, Laurel Avenue, Sherburn Hill
Peterlee and Seaham	Easington	Easington Children's Centre	Easington, Murton
	Peterlee East	Horden Children's Centre	Horden, Blackhall
	Seaham	Seaham Children's Centre	Seaham
	Peterlee Central	Seascape Children's Centre	Dene House, Howletch, Seascape
	Peterlee West	Wheatley Hill Children's Centre	Haswell, Shotton, Thornley, Wheatley Hill, Wingate
Ferryhill and Newton Aycliffe	Ferryhill	Dean Bank Children's Centre	Chilton, Dean Bank, Fishburn
	Spennymoor	Tudhoe Moor Children's Centre	Middlestone Moor, Tudhoe Moor, West Cornforth
	Newton Aycliffe	Newton Aycliffe Children's Centre	Newton Aycliffe, Shildon

Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle	Bishop Auckland	St Helen Auckland Children's Centre	Coundon, St Helen's, Woodhouse Close
	Durham Dales	Willington Children's Centre	Evenwood, Middleton in Teesdale, Weardale (Stanhope), Willington

What has been used to inform our proposal?

Due to the savings the council needs to make, we can only afford to keep 15 out of the 43 Children's Centre buildings if we want to protect frontline staff and service delivery.

There are also other issues that have highlighted the need for change. These include:-

- the needs of children and young people in County Durham;
- the views of parents and carers through a survey carried out in 2013;
- the views of some of our partners such as schools;
- Ofsted inspection outcomes;
- legal requirements;
- what other local authorities provide; and
- The impact of children's centres in relation to outcomes for children and families.

The information above highlighted to us that a review of our Children's Centre services was required and so we had to look in more detail at all our 43 centres so that we could put some proposals together to make improvements. The factors below were used to help us to develop our proposal and recommendations which include the development of a new community delivery model. This will result in a reduction of Children's Centres from 43 to 15 but will give us opportunities to have greater flexibility to deliver services in more venues, closer to where children and families live. The factors include:-

- Where under 5s live in County Durham:
    - where families need more support
    - where under 5s are not reaching their potential
- Centres which can provide space to deliver activities and provide accommodation for staff.

We are confident that the new community delivery model will positively impact on families and give the Council greater flexibility to deliver in more venues, closer to where families live whilst achieving the necessary savings.

8. Links to other Significant Consultations

MTFP consultation.

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Sub Group	Consultation Activity/Method/Considerations	Timescale
Area Action Partnerships (AAPs)		Presentations and information to be provided to 14 AAP Boards.	**Consultation period**
			31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014
Children under 5	Including disabled children and BME children	Consultation activity delivered through children's centre activities in all localities, including portage groups, other groups supporting disabled children and BME groups	**Consultation period**
			31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014
Children and Families Partnership		Presentation of key messages and advising how representatives can participate in the consultation.	**22nd September 2014**
Daycare Providers	All	Circulation of Key Messages	**Consultation period**
		Presentation at termly meeting including information re responding to the consultation	**31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014**
		Questionnaire - online/paper	
Health partners	Clinical Commissioning Groups	Presentation to the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board	**3rd September 2014**
	(North Durham CCG, Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCG)		
	Foundation Trusts:	Presentation to the County Durham	**3rd September 2014**

	(Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust)	Health and Wellbeing Board	
	NHS Commissioning Board Local Area Team - Durham, Darlington and Tees	Presentation to the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board	**3rd September 2014**
	Public Health England	Circulation of Key Messages – Briefing Note	**Consultation period**
			31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014
Local Advisory Boards		To be co-ordinated at a locality level including :-	**Consultation period**
		Focus Group	**31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014**
		Questionnaire	
Members	Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Presentation of key messages and advising how representatives can participate in the consultation	**25th September 2014**
OFSTED		Inform of Consultation	**30th July 2014**
Parents	Parents of children under 5, including young parents, BME parents	Focus groups	**Consultation period**
		Parent Forums	**31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014**

	and parents with a disability.	Questionnaires (paper/online) – one to one support available where needed.	
		All materials to be reviewed – Easy Speak	
		Social Media	
		Young parents groups	
		Groups for BME families	
	*Parents who use daycare in Children's Centres		**Consultation period**
		*It is likely that parents who may be directly affected by the proposed reduction in centres may need additional opportunities to contribute to the consultation and these will be made available.	**31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014**
Schools	Head Teachers	Questionnaire – online/paper	**31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014**
		Information available on Extranet	
	Governing Bodies	Article in Termly Governor Newsletter including consultation methods	**Consultation period**
			31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014
Staff	One Point staff (LA and Health)	Intranet – One Point page Staff briefings	**Continuous updates**
	Wider staff within CAS	Intranet (and/or a focus group where necessary)	**Consultation period**
	Other DCC staff		**31st July 2014 – 23rd October 2014**
Town and Parish Councils	Local Council Working Group	Presentation at Local Council Working Group	**5th September 2014**

		Letter to all councils (including how to feedback) – emailed to clerks.	
		Representation on AAPs	
Voluntary and Community sector organisations	Voluntary & Community Sector Working Group	Presentation at VCS Working Group	**16th September 2014**
		Questionnaire distributed through appropriate medium e.g. Durham Voice	
		Representation at LABs and AAPs	

Appendix 9 - Durham County Council – Altogether Better equality impact assessment form

MTFP Reference: CAS 5.17 – Review Services for Early Years

NB: Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies plans, functions, policies, procedures and services. We are also legally required to publish our assessments.
You can find help and prompts on completing the assessment in the guidance from page 7 onwards.

Section one: Description and initial screening

Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.	
Service/team or section: Children and Adults Services, Children's Services	
Lead Officer: Julie Scurfield, Countywide Strategic Manager	Start date: 24 January 2014
Subject of the Impact Assessment: (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate) **Purpose** This assessment reviews the equality impact of carrying out a potential public consultation on the future proposals for the delivery of Early Years Services in County Durham. **Background information** An Early Years Strategy and action plan will be presented to Cabinet followed by a report outlining the proposals for the future delivery of Early Years Provision. If substantial changes are proposed and Cabinet agree, a public consultation will be undertaken to seek the public view on the proposals.	

Consultation Plan

A consultation plan and timeline will be developed in preparation for a potential public consultation. The communication plan will ensure that all stakeholders including service users, employees, partners and elected members are given full opportunities to provide views on the proposed options for future delivery.

After the end of the consultation period, information from the interviews and responses will be collated and analysed and a report on the options available produced.

Who are the main stakeholders: General public / Employees / Elected Members / Partners/ Specific audiences/Other (please specify) –

Children's Centre service users, parents/carers/guardians, 0-5 early years population, Elected Members, partners and employees.

Is a copy of the subject attached? No

If not, where could it be viewed? Consultation plan will be available on request as appropriate.

Initial screening

Prompts to help you:
Who is affected by it? Who is intended to benefit and how? Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups? Is it likely to affect relations between different communities or groups, for example if it is thought to favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others? Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality?

Is there an actual/potential negative or positive impact on specific groups within these headings?
Indicate :Y = Yes, N = No, ?=Unsure

Gender	**Y**	Disability	**Y**	Age	**Y**	Race/ethnicity	**Y**	Religion or belief	**Y**	Sexual orientation	**Y**

How will this support our commitment to promote equality and meet our legal responsibilities?

Any consultation will take into account the requirements of individuals and their views, by providing a variety of methods for all to

participate and will respect the individual needs of all people across the range of protected characteristics.

Reminder of our legal duties:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination & harassment
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations between people from different groups
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and taking account of someone's disability, even where that involves treating them more favourably than other people

Involving people, particularly disabled people, in public life and decision making

What evidence do you have to support your findings?

A consultation is likely to have some impact on service users and their carers, families and friends. At this stage, an initial screening is appropriate. However, a full impact assessment will be carried out in due course to accompany any future report to Cabinet following consultation.

Decision: No Date: 24 January 2014

If you have answered 'No' you need to pass the completed form for approval & sign off.

Section two: Identifying impacts and evidence- Equality and Diversity

Section overview: this section identifies whether there are any impacts on equality/diversity/cohesion, what evidence is available to support the conclusion and what further action is needed.			
	Identify the impact: does this increase differences or does it aim to reduce gaps for particular groups?	Explain your conclusion, including relevant evidence and consultation you have considered.	What further action is required? (Include in Sect. 3 action plan)
Gender			
Age			
Disability			
Race/Ethnicity			
Religion or belief			
Sexual orientation			

How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?

Section three: Review and Conclusion

Summary: please provide a brief overview, including impact, changes, improvements and any gaps in evidence.			
Action to be taken	**Officer responsible**	**Target Date**	**In which plan will this action appear**
When will this assessment be reviewed?	Date: Complete		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?			
Lead officer - sign off: 			Date: 24 January 2014
Head of Service - sign off: 			Date: 24 January 2014
Equality and Diversity Lead – sign off: Claire McLaren, Strategic Manager, Service Quality and Development 			Date: 27 January 2014